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Second Caution

AGAINST

TRINITARIANISM;

OR,

A N I N Q U I R Y

Whether that System has not some Tendency to lead People
unto DEISM and ATHEISM.

IN

A L E T T E R

ADDRESSED TO

The Rev. Mr. FULLER, KETTERING.

BY A NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FARMER.

*Beware lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy and vain Deceit, after
the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after
Christ.*

ST. PAUL.

Market-Harborough :
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY W. HARROD;
And Sold by JOHNSON, St. Paul's Church-Yard, LONDON.

1800.
(PRICE ONE SHILLING.)

ms 565



1609/1957.

PREFACE.

I Suppose all who have much knowledge of the Christian World will grant, that there never were so many professors of Christianity known to turn infidels within the time, as there have been for these last twenty years.

Such extraordinary effects, must undoubtedly have some peculiar cause. And every one, who considers Revelation a real blessing to mankind, will endeavour to find out and exterminate whatever may lead unto a rejection of bible truth.

Upon reading Mr. Fuller's celebrated piece against the Socinians, I found he had written his last letter with a view to prove, that their system led unto Deism; and I observed that most of his brethren inculcated the same views of the subject upon their hearers; and many told me plainly, that if I was not already turned deist, I certainly very soon should become one; for as I had discarded his manner of worship, there was no medium between maintaining that mode and real infidelity.

This appeared to me a very serious and extraordinary charge, and what I could by no means re-

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concile with scripture or common sense. There was, as Mr. F. remarks, "as great discord between what he accounted truth and what I supposed to be so, as between the doctrine of lying still, and the doctrine of going forward;" for I knew that from conscience I had rejected his mode of worshipping Deity, *because* it was directly opposite to the Messiah's positive command and plain example, and now learned my present manner from Christ's express language and pattern. This practice I considered as an improvement upon my former conduct, and the only way of shewing a proper regard unto the scriptures, and the very best method that I could adopt of honouring both Christ and Almighty God his father who sent him.

Trinitarians had often instructed me thus to reject all human guides in matters of religion, and learn how to worship the Almighty immediately from Christ's own words and example, and I often said that I really wished to do so. But no sooner had I actually discarded all other creeds, and followed the Messiah alone as my only infallible teacher, than, to my astonishment, they taught their hearers to censure me as an enemy to Christ, and an advocate for Immorality and Deism. This treatment was paradoxical in the extreme! and required a further explanation before I could admit the justness or propriety of it.

As I wished not to be deceived in a matter of such importance, I endeavoured to examine more



impartially the ground on which I stood. And after some further inquiry, I came to Mr. F's conclusion, "That if I had erred God had not sufficiently revealed the thing in question, so as to make it level with my capacity, or else I had not searched after truth with that earnestness and impartiality I ought;" or, I must conclude, that my accusers were mistaken in censuring me so severely for following Christ's plan of worship before theirs. One of us I perceived must certainly be wrong: and that the public and ourselves might have an opportunity of determining more impartially upon which side the mistake rested, I could think of no better method than addressing Mr. F. as in the following letter.

Although he lays more stress upon maintaining the deity of Christ than any other topick in divinity, yet as he grants, "That men uninspired of God are liable to err;" and does not pretend to infallible inspiration, but invites any one to prove & rectify his mistakes, I need not make any apology for thus publicly addressing him on the subject. I would only just remark, that in what I am about to write, I intend to observe Mr. F's own rule, "Not court compliment, but use the most unreservedness of temper" in stating the sentiments of my heart, which I have learned from the bible concerning the character of the Messiah and Almighty God his father and our father who sent him. And as I

with all my readers to have a right understanding of the subject in debate, and clearly perceive what I am going to contend about, a few further introductory remarks may not be altogether improper to promote those ends.

Upon religious subjects, men professing Christianity, have long held a great diversity of opinions, but upon no one topic have their differences been so extremely wide as about this. If I was not really acquainted with the influence of religious prejudices, I could not think it possible that two rational beings could ever have drawn such very opposite conclusions from the same premises, as Mr. F. and I have done.

The Bible we both allow to be the only proper standard of infallible truth, and we are agreed, that the writers plainly affirm, there is but one God, even the Father, who is a spirit, and above all, and one Mediator between God and Man, the man Christ Jesus, the true Messiah, a man approved and sent of God. With the scriptures before our eyes, and both of us allowing such description of Almighty God and his Messenger to be revealed truth, it will be asked, Wherein then can we differ upon a subject so very plain? Although we perfectly coincide in our outset, we vary as widely in our conclusions as possible, and our difference about the meaning of the plainest things in revelation, are the most opposite that were.

were ever known in the world. The contest is nothing less than this, Whether an infinite and finite character are perfectly equal, and claim the same regard?

Mr. F. has endeavoured to prove, that from the same book where we learn Jesus Christ is a middle person between God and man, who was sent as Jehovah's servant, we likewise learn that he is to be worshipped as the only true God and Father of all. And farther maintains, that the one Almighty God is to be regarded as that very same being who is said to be mediator between man and his maker, and God's messenger who would always remain in subjection. This I neither understand nor believe to be true, *because*, I am certain it is contrary to reason and revelation, and the essential perfections of an infinite God: But in direct opposition to such notions I declare, That the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who sent the true Messiah, is that infinite being who alone is made known in the scriptures, to be worshipped as the only one Almighty God and supreme Governor of all, and that his son Jesus claims to be regarded as his servant in an inferior station, and will always remain in subjection unto him. I regard the Messiah as a finite dependant character, who derived his existence and all his powers from Jehovah, because he himself asserts it; & trinitarians worship him as the one independant & immutable

immutable God who always reigns as sovereign Deity.

Any person who is a stranger unto this controversy, upon hearing Mr. F. contend, that we are authorised from that being who says, "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me," to invoke one of his messengers as Deity, must, I apprehend, conclude, that such inconsistent sentiments could never be advanced from the bible by any man who was sincere and in his right mind! But notwithstanding a stranger to this contest could not help drawing such inferences, as I once held the same views of the subject, I believe that men equally honest in their inquiries and in their right minds, may be advocates for such irrational and antisciptural contradictions, as the Almighty God and his servant the Messiah having *now* exchanged stations, and become every way equal; and that the very same being who once was mediator between man and his maker now claims to be worshipped as the one supreme Creator and Governor of the world, and call it divine truth.

But, as this mode of changing the meaning of words, and the scripture person and character of Jehovah is somewhat very extraordinary, although quite common among trinitarians, it seems necessary to inform my readers by what means it is established to become so exceedingly popular. For there must be something peculiarly mysterious that

that leads such numbers to admire their mode of dividing, multiplying and changing the only true God of the Bible, when every body believes that he is absolutely one, and unchangeable.

But it was then particularly noticed by all, that whilst I was an advocate for such palpable contradictions as worshipping God's servant the Messiah as sovereign Deity, *to my shame*, I never once impartially reflected upon the meaning of the language of scripture, concerning the real character of Almighty God and the Messiah. And so long as I could read the bible, and not think upon the meaning of words, it was not material what names, station or character were given to Christ and his divine Father; for, although one is plainly represented as mediator and servant in subjection, and the other as supreme and independant governor above him; Christ as an inferior messenger, and his Father as sovereign God who sent him; one as a mutable, delegated and finite being who always acted in subordination unto a superior, and the other as the one immutable and infinite God of all. But notwithstanding this self-evident distinction and inequality between them, it was impossible for me to perceive any difference while I never thought upon the import of such language; so that, whether I stiled Christ God's inferior servant, his equal, or Jehovah himself, his superior, a mutable or immutable being, I could not suppose it possible to
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be wrong. The reason is very plain, I was previously persuaded, that Christ was to be worshipped as the one Almighty God who came himself in human nature, therefore I paid no kind of attention to what he said about his being sent by a superior being, or enjoining worshipping his Father as the only true God of all; & through inattention, I was become so exceedingly prejudiced in favor of the popular scheme, that I could understand the scriptures as if I had read them backwards, when Christ said that he did not come of himself to do his own will, I could suppose that he meant the contrary; and when he commanded his disciples to pray unto his Father as alone supreme God in his name, I could conclude that he then designed that they should pray unto himself as the only true God of all.

Some of my readers will probably enquire, how I came to adopt this retrograde and thoughtless way of reading the scriptures, and think it right to contradict the plain language of the Son of God! For their information I would observe, that I learned this strange method solely from Trinitarian Teachers. Both by precept and example, they had frequently instructed me to believe with confidence, that God's inferior mutable messenger, the Mediator, was to be invoked as the one Almighty God and Father of all; and persuaded me never to think upon the meaning of such words,

words, for that they were certain was the real sense of scripture concerning the person of Christ. And, although at the same time I knew, that the one God of the Bible declared himself, that he never changed, yet without thinking, I took it for granted upon their bare assertion, that Him and his servant the Messiah had now actually exchanged stations, and that I had authority from them to worship Christ as that very being who sent him. Through such interpretation, I paid no kind of regard to what Christ said about deity, so that he might as well never have mentioned the name of God at all!

But when I came impartially to consider what was the real bible-character of the one Almighty God and Father of all, & his messenger the Messiah, I could as soon join the fool who said in his heart, There is no God, as to continue to maintain that God's servant Jesus ought to be addressed as supreme Deity. My being persuaded to discard Christ's language and pattern, and follow others directions and example before his, appears now one of the greatest impositions that was ever usurped over the human mind; and to unite any longer with Mr.F. in dethroning Jehovah from the government of his own world; and to exalt his servant to worship as supreme God in his place, was to me now become a very disagreeable & impious task indeed. And I could with as great propriety

priety take up my pen to persuade myself and mankind, that the one Almighty God was an ignorant, weak, and unrighteous being, as join with any in maintaining, that he sustains the inferior offices of mediator and servant to another.

I now found, that the notions which I had learned from Mr. F. about the two-fold offices and character, the delegated and underived power, the mediatorial and absolute kingdom of Jehovah, banished every rational and scriptural idea of his essential perfections, and the necessary properties of the Mediator from the mind; and was as dishonourable unto both their real characters as words could possibly express. It is true, that Christ is represented as exalted to a state of great dominion and dignity at God's right hand, but then he acts in that high station solely by delegation from a superior being, which must be his situation, if he was the promised Messiah, & now our mediator & advocate with Jehovah; but that a delegated, mutable, and inferior deity, sent by another, is not the one sovereign Creator of the world who says, I am God and change not, I hope Mr. F. does not want to be informed. However, if Mr. F. is still so ignorant of his Bible, as to contend for the two-fold and opposite offices and character of servant and sovereign, mediator and supreme governor, messenger and sender, in the one infinite God of all, such notions appear to me the most daring

daring insult upon the human understanding, and real scripture character of Jehovah, that was ever imposed by the tongue or pen of man ! and such gross impositions must be perceived, the moment any one begins impartially to reflect upon the language of revelation, concerning the messiah and him that sent him ; and with me they could not help concluding, that it was as contrary to reason and scripture to worship God's servant Jesus as supreme Deity, as bowing the knee unto Nebuchadnezzar's graven image as the only Creator of the world.

Those mystical terms, triune, incarnate, god-man deity, I now perceived, had been a mere cloak for my inattention and ignorance, and a total obstruction to all impartial enquiry, and entirely blinded my understanding, so that I could not read the scriptures with my own eyes ; But when I once inspected such unmeaning phrases, and compared them in the light of divine truth, they crumbled all to pieces like Dagon before the ark. For, admitting the notion of the Almighty assuming a body, *that* would not have changed his original character from supreme Governor of the world, into a Mediator, Messenger, and Servant, or multiplied him into a number of persons. Had the New Testament writers designed to have informed us of the incarnation of the God of Israel, they could not have represented him as sus-

taining any inferior offices in subjection unto another, because they knew he was unchangeable. If Christ was that God who gave the law to Moses upon Mount Sinai, the foundation of his claims to be regarded must be the same in the Evangelist as in the former prophets; *because*, he alone was by nature the self-existent and independent Jehovah. But it is evident that the writers of the gospels had no view of an incarnate deity being "wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger," as Mr. F. affirms; for the ground on which they founded Christ's claim of respect was, not his being possessed of any inherent divine nature as Almighty God come from heaven, but *solely* upon his divine mission, and his Father alone, who sent him, as the only object of supreme adoration. And the Messiah himself, whom we ought to allow to be a proper judge, rested his *sole* authority of requiring to be heard, *because God sent him*, and not as Jehovah in human nature as many maintain. Now if I regard the Son of God upon that very ground on which he demands my esteem, I thereby declare, that I am bound not to invoke the Messiah as the only one supreme God who sent him. And, if I unite with those who discard worshipping the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as alone sovereign deity, as I never read in the scriptures of any other one supreme God above all, such conduct as Mr. F. observes "can
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be deemed nothing less than to divest the bible of God."

As Mr. F. says "There is nothing like experiment in religion," and I only wish every man would determine with me to bring this subject to a fair and impartial trial, and then, I doubt not but he will presently find, that in worshipping an inferior character as deity, he has been building upon the sand of human tradition instead of the rock of immutable truth. It is true, that I had built a mighty superstructure indeed upon the foundation of those wonderful distinctions about the twofold and opposite nature, offices and characters of the Messiah, as the one Almighty God, and it stood exceeding well, while I never examined upon what it was founded; but no sooner did I begin to try the propriety and strength of my fabric by the plain words of scripture and common sense, than I found myself exactly in the same condition as the Babel-builders, quite confounded by my own language, and, in attempting to understand my real meaning, my admirable building all fell down, and, to my great confusion, so ruinous was the fall of it to me, that not one single peg could I ever replace again.

When I came impartially to examine my notions which others had taught me about composition of nature, inequality of offices and change of character in the Almighty, I found that such descrip-
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tion might be applicable to some heathen deities, who are supposed to alter their stations and dispositions at the change of weather, or according unto the circumstances of their worshippers; But was as opposite to the scripture character of Jehovah, as Baal, Dagon, or Diana. Inference and analogy may be admitted as proper data on some subjects in religion, but not upon this, *because*, no inferential reasoning can change the meaning of words, or alter the real nature of things. After all the immense pains that creed-makers have taken to change the person, properties and character of the only true God of the Bible, I find that he still remains the same, if his word may be taken. And, only by believing what Jehovah said of himself and his Son to be truth, is quite sufficient to prove, that what Trinitarians say of them is a notorious falsehood. I must therefore, now worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as alone the one supreme God of all, or declare, that Christ and him that sent him are lyars, *because*, they both affirm that they are two separate and unequal beings, and claim a distinct and unequal regard. But to form such opinions of the Messiah and our heavenly Father, which, holding my former notions necessarily led me to do, was now, as Mr.F. observes, "too undisguis'd to gain credit with serious minds any longer," who had began to think in earnest for themselves upon the subject.

Practically observing a judicious distinction I once heard Mr. F. make from the pulpit, was an effectual means of entirely demolishing my former edifice, which I had built *solely* upon mere mystical and antisciptural terms. He there noticed, "That if we wished to be preserved from error, and adopt clear and consistent ideas of divine truth, we must learn to distinguish clearly between men's *mere* opinions and their real principles, the latter being founded upon indubitable evidence, and the former merely on custom and education, & supported by confidence." This distinction led me to account for those very many self-evident contradictions I have heard Mr. F. advance to establish his popular creed, *contrary* unto the real principles of every good man's heart.

Mr. F. somewhere inform us, "That the truth which God will have all men come to the knowledge of, is plainly intended, that of the one God who is above all, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Herein I perfectly coincide with him, *because*, such doctrines are founded upon infallible testimony, and are a proper foundation for the exercise of real principles in the understanding in embracing them. But while I was not satisfied with such plain truths the Almighty designed that we should believe in order to be happy, I maintained with Mr. F. that since the apostolic age, some how or other, the
Messiah

Messiah and Mediator had exchanged stations with Almighty God, his Father, who sent him, and God's messenger is now become a proper object of divine adoration. But then, these notions were merely my education opinions, founded upon the confident assertions of Trinitarians, which, when I came to observe Mr. F's method of distinguishing between the genuine sentiments of my heart, concerning the one infinite God of all, I found to be quite opposite unto revelation and my own views of his real character. And I could now as easily conclude, that when Jehovah commands us to love him supremely, he meant that we should hate him sincerely, as affirm with Mr. F. that when Deity says, Thou shalt have no other Gods but me, he then intended that we should worship the promised Messiah as the only one true God.

And by adopting Mr. F's wise caution, I further learned to distinguish between the nature and foundation of the faith once delivered unto the saints of old, and those articles of faith he requires a subscription unto as the test of orthodoxy. Primitive faith was founded upon evidence. Respecting the person of the Messiah, their language was, We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God, a man approved of God, and it was upon the testimony of Christ and he that sent him, that this confession was grounded; but the faith of most modern
christians

christians is quite of a different nature, instead of being founded upon the belief of the truth, it is *contrary unto all the evidence in the world*, and is established *solely upon a known falsity!*

Concerning the person of the Mediator and Messiah, their language is, We believe and are sure that Jesus is not the Christ, a man approved and sent by God, but the one Almighty God himself. And if we ask them for proof, they have nothing to support such assertions but their confidence, for all *know* that reason and revelation are against such impossibilities. We are as certain that the only one true God of the Bible never acted in subjection unto a superior being, which Christ declares that he did, as we are, that there is any supreme God at all. This I found to be a plain fact, that, as apostolic faith was established upon the real evidence of divine truth, my former creed about Christ, was formed in direct opposition unto the clearest evidence of its being true, that words could possibly express. For it is a self-evident fact, that an infinite God could no more change his station and become mediator and servant, than he could lose his knowlege, and cease to exist!

By strictly adhering to Mr. F's distinction, I found that I had long possessed the most powerful enemy against my former notions in my own bosom, only to borrow Mr. Bunyan's stile, that old villain prejudice had darkened my lord understanding's win-

dows, and gagged the mouth of the recorder conscience, that it was not allowed to speak. But no sooner did that rascal prejudice receive his death wound, than the whole town of man's soul was new modelled, the windows all opened, and the voice of the recorders of the truth heard, and regarded. I did not now want to be informed by Dr. Priestley, whether I was to worship the Messiah or him that sent him as the one Almighty God of all, I could plain enough distinguish with my own eyes, that when God sent his son, as his messenger, he did not come himself. I wanted neither the advice of the learned, or the prescriptions of ecclesiastics to tell me, whether an infinite and finite character were perfectly equal; for I had the concurring testimony of God himself & the whole world to declare the contrary. It was such a self-evident truth in my own mind, that the only one true God of all never filled a lower station than absolute sovereignty, that it was no longer with me a matter of choice, whether I believed that the Mediator was the supreme God of Christians or not. I could as consistently go about to persuade my neighbours, that my eldest son was born the same day that I was, as to unite with Mr. F. in maintaining, that when the Almighty sent his son Jesus, this messenger was the everlasting God who came himself; and I could as easily subscribe to a creed which affirmed that Mr. F. was the creator of the world, as that
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God's servant the Messiah was supreme Deity, for one is no more contrary to reason and scripture than the other. These are even such stubborn facts, that I might as well attempt to deny my own existence as to contradict them.

I now clearly perceived that there were but two possible means that any rational man could continue an enemy unto the unity of the person of the Father as the only sovereign God of all, and an advocate for the deity of God's messenger the Mediator; one is, what I have already noticed, *never to think upon the meaning of words*, and the other method is, by supposing that the sacred writers made use of language in a direct *contrary sense* from all other writers. Grammarians, lexicographers, historians and critics of every description, among all nations and in all ages, have unanimously declared, that no inferiority of office or change of nature, character or station can ever be properly predicated of an infinite being. And these wise and respectable witnesses universally affirm, That no person sustaining an inferior office, as messenger or servant to another, can be entitled to the real character of the only supreme Deity, or claim to be worshipped as the one independent Almighty God of all. But if Mr. F's notions are true, the Bible writers are an exception to this general rule; for although they positively declare, that Christ is a mediator and servant unto a superior being, and

that the only true God and Father of all is without any variableness or shadow of turning, yet, they invariably meant the *contrary*, that Jehovah changed his station and became a servant, and that Christ now reigns as sovereign God.

But before I can admit that the inspired writers could thus make use of words concerning the real character of the Messiah, and Almighty God his Father, in a direct opposite sense from all other writers, I must insist upon Mr. F. first proving what he somewhere asserts, "That there are certain points wherein the most opposite extremes are known to meet." Indeed! when Mr. F. has made this quite plain, I shall again maintain with him, that the penman of scripture would say one thing and mean the contrary, and that the only true God and Father of all and his inferior messenger are one and the same infinite being, or have now exchanged stations with each other.

It is true, to my shame, that before I began to think in earnest upon the subject, I pretended to find no difficulty in reconciling these very wide extremes. But then it was not in ideas, but only upon paper like Mr. F. that any reconciliation could ever take place. And a subscription unto all the creeds in the world never yet effected any change in the person or character of the Almighty, nor, Mr. F. knows, ever will. Besides, if I grant that the inditers of the word of scripture meant
that

that Christ should be worshipped as the one sovereign God, when they expressly affirm the contrary, I have just the same reason to invoke each of God's servants as supreme as his servant Jesus, *because*, they are equally as decisive in declaring Christ's real inferiority and separation from infinite deity as any of them. Therefore, I must entirely discard addressing the mediator as God, or unite with the papists in invoking all the saints upon their calendar, and all the good men in the bible as deities!

I acknowledge, that while I held with Mr. F. "That there are certain points wherein the most opposite extremes are known to meet," and never reflected upon the meaning of words, I could maintain with him, that the same person, the messiah, sustained the opposite offices character of an infinite God and a finite creature, was both a mutable and immutable, a dependent and independent being; the one mediator and messenger between God and man who was sent as a servant, and yet the only supreme governor of the world who came himself, the one Almighty God who reigned on his throne above all, and yet an inferior character who acted in subjection unto another. But then, these notions were only my mere education opinions, which, the moment I followed Mr. F's advice of distinguishing between the genuine principles of my heart, I found that all my delegated, mutable
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and inferior gods were mere imaginary paper deities, that when they came to be examined and compared with Jehovah, vanished into fiction and non-entities. And I can now as easily believe that I could convert an oyster, or all the idols in the universe, into the one sovereign Creator of the world, as God's servant the messiah.

That vast fund of knowledge which I had pretended to have collected from authors, to learn how to change an infinite God into a finite character, and exalt a person in an inferior office into absolute sovereignty, was now totally lost for ever! The mystical plan that Mr.F. had taught me, to reconcile a trinity of persons with the scripture unity of God, I now found to be real *polytheism* in disguise. Upon the very same principle of *mystery* which I had contended for, the addition of two more divine persons and a man, unto Christ's prescriptive form of worshipping the Father as alone supreme Deity, I might, quite as consistent with revelation, contend for adding two thousand. By taking upon me to change the only proper bible object of divine adoration enjoined by the messiah, into a mutable and inferior character, on the very same ground I might justify all the superstition and idolatry in the world. For, if it is lawful to invoke any one of God's inferior messengers instead of himself, it cannot be wrong to worship all the creatures he has made as deities. I must, therefore,
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discard worshipping the mediator as deity, or declare that every creature in the universe is infinite, or, that there is no one supreme being revealed in the bible as the christian's God.

As I before observed, I found that I had been taught to learn every thing upon this subject *backwards*; so that, when I came to enquire what saith the scriptures, instead of hearkening to what said the Fathers, and was now to go about to write a book consonant with my former creed, I must vote for an entire new bible and a new God, before I could stile it divine. The writers of the scriptures were advocates for the mediation and messiahship of Christ and the unity of Almighty God, and I conclude that they were *strict*, uniform and sincere Unitarians, because they never contradicted themselves and said that Christ and his Father were one God, but positively affirmed that the only being they worshipped as supreme deity, was but one person, even the Father of all who was a spirit, and without any variableness or shadow of turning. Therefore, before I can consistently with Trinitarianism, call the present bible divine truth, I must insist upon a new translation, and order the printer to blot out the very name, character and existence of the one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and primitive christians, and put in those mystical terms triune, trinity, God-man, &c. in his place. For as I never yet heard of any change
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taking place in the nature, person and character of Almighty God since the apostles' time, only in trinitarian creeds; before I can with propriety admit their unmeaning phrases as preferable to the plain language of the Son of God, and worship Christ instead of that God who sent him, I must insist upon their producing a book inspired from heaven to prove, that the one God of the Jews and the christian messiah have actually exchanged stations. Until they have really proved such a change between Christ and his divine Father, I have as good reason to conclude, that invoking an inferior character, the Mediator, as Deity, is not worshipping the one God of the Bible, as bowing unto a graven image is contrary to the command of Jehovah.

Through adopting Mr.F's wise caution, that "we must learn what is divine truth immediately from the oracles of God," I was led to draw these conclusions from my former mode of divine worship; and were I now to join with him in addressing my prayers to the Messiah, as the sovereign God of all, I think that I should act a more *inconsistent* part than either the Deist or Atheist. The man who denies that the universe had any creator, makes no use of his reason, and he who rejects revelation as a fiction, sets up his own reason as a more perfect guide than the wisdom of his maker; but if I profess to make the scriptures the only rule of divine worship, and yet invoke a
person

person as deity who declares that he was sent as a servant unto the only true God of all, I not only pervert my reason, contradict the Messiah and him that sent him, and divest the Bible of God, but unite with heathens in setting up a new Deity in the place of the one Almighty Father of all, and thereby contend for worshipping the creature instead of the only sovereign Creator ! And, although greatly to my disgrace be it spoken, I have been too long persuaded by preachers of the gospel, who I think ought to know better, highly to applaud such antichristian conduct, I now cannot help declaring from my heart, that for me to continue to unite with any in such practices, would be *irrational, antisciptural and impious* in the extreme !!!

Viewing the subject, as thus stated, has led me to conclude, that the mode of worshipping Deity, which I learned from Mr. F. instead of deserving the name of promoting Christianity, if followed up to its legitimate consequences, will lead me into Deism and Atheism ! And whether I am right or wrong, or deserve those severe censures Trinitarians have combined together to brand me with, they may perceive, that my premises and conclusions are founded upon Mr. F's just and scriptural *data*, "The Gospel its own Witness." The Almighty has made known his true gospel in his word by his beloved son, and commands us

to hear him. Consistent with my professed regard to Christ, as my only infallible teacher and pattern, I now think that his plain language and conduct ought to be admitted as the best evidence what were his own and his father's real characters and just claims. And as he never once declared, that he himself was the one supreme God, but invariably affirmed the *contrary*, and worshipped a superior being as his God, and taught his disciples to pray unto the same, as the one Almighty God of all. Not to allow him the honour of being his own witness, and his practice worthy of imitation, was to deny him the privilege of an honest and good man, which I had too often done; but have now determined to treat him with such contempt no longer.

Christ plainly declared, that he was a man who told the truth which he heard of God, & that the true worshippers worship the Father, who was a spirit, in spirit & truth, as the only true God. And let who will unite with Mr. F. in contradicting and opposing his language and practice, I must admit his testimony concerning himself and his divine father, as a sufficient and infallible witness for what were both their real characters and just dues. And, whenever I pray, pray to the father alone, as supreme God, and regard the Messiah as his servant, whom he sent, and invite Mr. F. and all my readers to do the same, except they can find

find a more perfect standard of divine adoration, than the command and example of the Son of God.

But in vain I expect that I now take up my pen and unite with Mr. F. to convert infidels unto Christianity by pleading, "That the gospel is its own witness," and deserves an impartial hearing: For those who stop their ears with Mr. F. and will not hearken to the plain testimony of Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, when they repeatedly affirm that Jesus is not the one Almighty God in human nature; neither do I suppose that they would be persuaded from invoking him as sovereign Deity, *even* if one was sent from the dead, or the Messiah descended from heaven to inform them again, as he often did while here upon earth, that he was a servant and messenger of Jehovah, and not the supreme God and Father of all.

However, as Mr. F. and many of his brethren have changed their views upon other religious subjects, probably I shall go too far if I say, that it is impossible for them to be brought to impartial reflection upon this. There have been men as confidently contending for their education opinions of worshipping God's servant as Deity as Mr. F. who have afterwards learned to distinguish between such notions and the scripture character of the Almighty, and the genuine principles of their hearts, and have believed their bibles, seen

their folly, and recanted; and, as I know Mr. F. to be a thinking, rational man, I will not quite despair of trying to bring him to think rationally and scripturally about the real character of Almighty God and the Messiah, which he has taken a great deal of pains to misrepresent, to support a favorite system.

With a view to restore Mr. F's own mind, and my prejudiced readers unto the proper exercise of their understandings, and assist them to lay aside all their prepossessions in favor of their education-opinions, and realize the scripture character of Almighty God and his servant the Messiah, I would recommend, to all my readers, a judicious caution Mr. F. somewhere gives his opponent, which has been of singular use in assisting me to read controversies with advantage, it reads as follows: "Let us all take heed of our attachment to divine truth itself be, on account of its being divine. Happy will it be for us all if truth be the sole object of our enquiries, and if our attachment to divine truth itself be not on account of its being what we once engaged to defend, but what God has revealed."

By observing this truly pious, christian, and prudent admonition of Mr. F's, I have been brought out of that superstitious whirlpool of perplexities and confusion about compounding, dividing, multiplying, and changing the nature, person,

person, and character of the one unchangeable God and his servant Jesus; and now enjoy much of that happiness, which is the result of cordially embracing what God has plainly revealed as the only proper standard of divine truth.

Such substantial and superlative felicity, which Mr. F. has long, I hope, inadvertently deprived himself, and many others of, by not believing the plain record that God has given of himself and his Son, I sincerely wish that he, and all my readers, may obtain and hold fast until their dying hours: Then, at the resurrection morning, they may expect to be presented by our great master, Jesus, along with his faithful followers, into the presence of his and our heavenly Father and glorious God, with exceeding joy.

I remain,

A sincere Advocate for the just rights of

Almighty God and his Servant the Messiah.

E. SHARMAN.

Cottesbrooke, June 24th, 1800.

person, and character of the one unchangeable God and his eternal loves, and how enjoy much of that happiness which is the result of certainly embracing what God has plainly revealed as the only mode (band) of divine truth, &c.

Such substantial and repetitive testimony, which Mr. F. has long I hope, manfully and bravely borne, and which, and many others of us, not believing the plain record that God has given of him, tell and his Son, I speak with that he, and all my readers, may receive and hold fast with abiding hearts. I have a testimony more important, they may expect to be blessed by our great Master, Jesus, along with his faithful followers, and the presence of his and our heavenly Father and glorious God, with execution for

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

UNMSALB

A

SECOND CAUTION

AGAINST

TRINITARIANISM.

REVEREND SIR,

MY Preface has been much longer than I at first intended, but if the end for which it was designed is but answered by it, to set my readers impartially thinking upon the subject, I shall make no apology for its length. However others attention may be arrested in reading the foregoing pages, I hope that you will not forget to keep in mind, in perusing what follows, your own wise caution, "**LET WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED BE THE ONLY STANDARD TO DETERMINE WHAT IS RIGHT.**" By always keeping this data in view, we may read each other's writings with advantage, although we may differ much in our opinions.

Be it then observed, That it is an allowed fact that numbers have lately actually rejected christianity, as spurious, and turned infidels; and, no doubt,

doubt, all of them were influenced by some leading motive for their conduct ; but there may have been various means united which have contributed to lead to that end, and a vast variety of opinions, and much difficulty, in assigning the primary and only influential cause.

Yet, however difficult it may be to assign the sole cause of infidelity, I think you will agree with me that there are two things, wherever they meet, which have some tendency to lead that way ; one is, When there is a perfect agreement between the Deist and any party in their leading principles and mode of proceeding to support their scheme ; the other I would notice is, When there is a direct opposition in their language and practice to that of Christ and his apostles.

As professing Christians, we all acknowledge to own Christ as our only master, and that those of our opinions which are nearest his standard are most like unto primitive Christianity. You suppose that the plan I have now adopted is quite opposite to his rules of divine worship, and subversive of his religion ; and as I think that your scheme is of that nature, I shall endeavour to compare the principles of Deism with yours, and your language and practice with that of the infallible writers. Then, as you remark, " If it should be proved that the same principles occupies a place, yea, and an important place in the (Trinitarian) scheme,

scheme, it will follow, that Trinitarianism and Deism must be nearly allied" and lead to the same end; and if following the plain directions and example of Christ is the only proof of being real promoters of his cause, and to establish your plan of worship, you are obliged to contradict and oppose his language and practice, and set up an opposite object of divine adoration from that he enjoined, it will appear that you unite with the deist and atheist in discarding revelation, and divesting the bible of God. How far this is a real fact, the following remarks are submitted unto your impartial consideration.

You will then observe, That in all points of consequence wherein you disagree with real Unitarians you seem to coincide with Deists. One of the most important sentiments in the scheme of infidelity, it is well known; is the sufficiency of human reason to instruct mankind to worship Almighty God with acceptance. They make reason the *sole* umpire in matters of faith: One of the most essential objections which I have against Trinitarianism is, *because* the advocates for that scheme entirely *discard* the plain testimony of revelation, as law, and make their *reason* the only foundation on which they support their plan. Herein you appear to agree with Deists.

But as you Reverend Orthodox Gentlemen frequently exclaim against your opponents for mak-

ing too much use of their reason, you may be ready to suppose, that I cannot do you justice, by asserting that you make reason *all in all* to establish your system. Indeed, I do not mean that you offer any thing reasonable to support your notions; for surely! nothing can be more irrational, than to persuade mankind that when the Almighty sent his messenger the Messiah, he then came himself, or that the unchangeable Jehovah had exchanged stations with his servant Jesus, as you affirm. But it is by sophistry or false reasoning that you impose your opinions as divine. You first confidently affirm that the Almighty says we ought to worship the Messiah as supreme, and then, by reasoning distort the scriptures to make them speak your creed.

The supreme Governor of the world, you say, requires that his justice be satisfied by an infinite atonement, and his broken law fulfilled by a divine person, before he can find in his heart to pardon his guilty creatures; and the divine appointment of Christ is not sufficient with you to answer that purpose, although the Almighty declares that it is. But from no part of your bible can you learn such doctrine: The nature and fitness of things is your *only data*. Sin, you assert, is an infinite evil, and the God offended requires an infinite satisfaction, and, from a superstitious imagination you can invent a second infinite God, and then

then change this self-created deity into the person of the Messiah, or the character of Almighty God into that of mediator and servant, and then, stile Jehovah and his Messenger, with your imaginary gods, a triune Deity, and god-man Mediator: But such beings, all the world knows, are not the one supreme God of the Bible, who changes not, and the one Mediator between God and man. You are certain, that it is not from the sacred oracles that you can learn such doctrine. Inference and analogy, in opposition to plain revelation, is your *only* foundation for worshipping the Messiah and him that sent him, as the one Almighty God of all; and, although you contend, "that it is wrong and presumptuous to set up reason as a standard to decide what is divine truth," yet, such extreme presumption are you guilty of, as to unite with the deists in rejecting revelation, and making your reason *sole* umpire in this article of your faith.

But why you should thus take upon you to exalt your reason above the scriptures, to change the real character of Almighty God, and the Messiah, whom he sent, with a view to support a popular system, is, I think, deserving your enquiry. Rationality is a gift that our Creator has conferred upon man, to distinguish him above the brute creation, and, the proper exercise of that faculty appears to consist, in a due subordination of our natural passions and rational powers unto the go-

vernment and service of him that made us. But to allow the Bible to be a revelation of God's will to mankind, and yet persuade us, as you have done, that we ought *not* to credit for truth what he has plainly made known of himself and his beloved son is, I conceive, a daring perversion of our reason, and insulting the wisdom and authority of our maker. Jehovah, who is a spirit, positively declares of himself, that he alone is God, and changes not, and that Jesus Christ was his servant, and would always remain in subjection unto him; and why Mr. F. by his logics and metaphysics, should be allowed to have really changed the station of Christ and him that sent him, and the meaning of words, and proved them both liars, is, as you remark, "too undisguised, we might hope, to gain credit with serious minds any longer." It really looks more like contending for infidelity than christianity. If Mr. F. will thus presumptuously exalt his fallen reason above the language of Jehovah and his son Jesus, I think that it is very unreasonable in him to censure others because they will not follow his example.

And, as you join the infidel, in exalting your opinions above divine law, so you appear to coincide with them in being equally as *undeterminate* in your meaning. Natural religion is a vague term, and there has been much contention among its advocates to settle an exact standard; and after all

all that has been said upon the subject, it still remains undetermined. Trinity in unity, and god-man mediator, are *equally* as vague. The admirers of those terms have had many long contests to decide with precision what were there ideas, but, after much investigation, they are greatly divided in their conclusions: Some declaring for three persons, others for three offices, and many for mere names; and no wonder at this great diversity, for such mystical terms were never designed to convey any meaning, but only to serve as a blind to mens' understandings, to prevent them reading the Bible-account of Almighty God and the Messiah with their own eyes, and imbibing scripture views of their real characters and just claims.

This will further appear evident, by observing, that, as you make use of phrases without any meaning, so you unite with the Deist about the *non-importance* of principle itself on the subject. When a man is once fixed in the tenets of Deism, it is generally considered but of little consequence to puzzle himself about sentiments; all that he now has to do, to hold fast his scheme, is to persevere in discarding revelation and persuade himself that he is in the right way. In the very same manner you establish your notions for divine truth. Be sure to continue to reject the scripture unity of God, and the plain account of his real character, and that of his servant Jesus, and hold fast

fast your notions of exchanging their office and station as an important mystery, and all principles on the subject will be banished from the understanding, and examination becomes a crime. Indeed, three coequal persons, sustaining three separate, unequal, and opposite offices and characters, as one and the same infinite, indivisible, and unchangeable being, is such a self-evident anti-scriptural contradiction, that it beggars all the powers of thought and language to expose its absurdity. Such *ideas* of the one Almighty God and Father of all, and the Messiah, can never be formed by human or divine intelligencies, or described by the tongue or pen of man ! It is a creed that annihilates every rational view of Jehovah out of the mind, and is altogether enveloped in mysterious *darkness* in the extreme ! and gross ignorance and a superstitious credulity, or an unprincipled mind, is the only place where such notions can possibly exist, and confidence, contrary to evidence, the only possible means to propagate them. If, therefore, as you affirm, "an unprincipled mind is a mind which scripture and common sense agree to execrate," surely Mr. F. will no longer join any sect in propagating opinions which are built *solely* upon such a sandy foundation.

I hope that I do not misrepresent Mr. F's plan of worship ; if I do, I can truly say with him, that "misrepresentation is not my aim." But let us
further

further examine your conduct, & I think it will appear that I speak the truth in declaring, that no man ever had any *real* principles upon the doctrine of the deity of God's servant the Messiah, nor ever will. Only at the very mention of an inferiority of office and character, and delegated power in an infinite God, every rational and pious mind *revolts* with indignation and abhorrence, if they ever think seriously on the subject. But that you can have no principles, will, I think, plainly appear by observing that great diversity in your manner of worship. For although you all contend for invoking Christ as the only one Almighty God of all, yet, to visit your places of devotion, we might justly conclude, that scarce any two of you addressed the same being. Some of you pay Christ only a kind of complimentary worship, by just mentioning his name as a part of deity at the close; others never directly pray unto him at all, and many to no other person besides. And, as a plain proof that you have no ideas of the being you invoke as God, I have often heard numbers of you change the object of worship more than twenty times in the same prayer and sermon, as if you thought the Almighty was really as mutable as yourselves. But why such absurdities in your worship? But because you never think on your words, but are governed merely by the *sound* of your creed. There can be no greater evidence of an unprincipled mind

mind than your contradicting yourselves and the scriptures so repeatedly. If you really mean to worship Christ as that one God who never changes, Why do you pretend to change his character any more than his father's who sent him? for if they are both equally supreme, as your creed affirms, there can be no inferiority in either.

As you generally begin your devotion alone to the Father in the name of Christ, it looks as if you then thought the Messiah was really inferior to Deity, and yet, before you conclude, exalt Christ to an equality with or even above his father, as if you supposed they really exchanged stations during the time of your worship; but you can, surely, have no such meaning. Certainly you are very inconsistent in your language with your system, *because*, if Christ is, what you affirm, the only one God of all, ninety-nine parts of your devotion out of an hundred, being immediately to the Father alone, is not adressed unto the true God. You need only reflect how often by your words you change the character of the Almighty, and yet mean the *contrary*, as a sufficient proof of an unprincipled mind; "that scripture and common sense agree with Mr. F. to execrate."

Indeed, so far from your having any real principles upon such opinions, to realize your own *views*, would totally exterminate them out of the world, or, as you somewhere express yourself,
 "The

"The goodness of your heart would overcome the badness of your creed." And you would find the most obstinate opponent against your scheme within your own breast. Only discard your unmeaning phrases, and exercise your own understanding when you pray to Almighty God, and that would be quite sufficient to annihilate your notions from your creed and your bible for ever; and we should hear no more of your changing the person and character of an infinite God from your pulpit, at the beginning, middle or close of your worship, than transubstantiation or popish infallibility.

Do but once observe your own wise caution, "Distinguish clearly between your mere education opinions and the *genuine* principles of your own heart, and you would immediately perceive, that invoking God's servant the Messiah was as contrary to reason, revelation and your own *real* views of deity, as the Israelites worshipping the golden calf was opposite to the second commandment.

There is one more principle that I would notice, wherein you appear to coincide with Deists, your opinions being *congenial* with the most immoral practices. Although, to recommend your notions to your readers, you have excluded the immoral from your party, yet it is an incontrovertible fact, that the greatest numbers of the most notorious characters that ever disgraced the christian world, have lived and died advocates for the

Doctrine of the Trinity and Deity of the Messiah. Let the conduct of the majority of the intolerant clergy of the church of England and Rome vouch for the truth of what I affirm. It is vain & sophistical for Mr. F. to say, "that if there be any among us who act thus we disown such characters," for they certainly belonged to no other party, but were brethren with you in opinions, although I will not class Mr. F. as a brother and advocate with them in all their antichristian practices. Yet, thus much I think that these facts will be allowed to prove, that your system, like the deist's, is not so hostile to the reign of sin, and influential to promote genuine religion, as you have represented it, but rather appears quite the reverse, *because*, the far greater number of those who have embraced your scheme have been the most impious characters. These remarks shall suffice to shew the harmony between the leading principles of Trinitarianism and Deism; I shall further notice wherein they agree in their manner of proceeding to establish and propagate their respective schemes.

You will then observe, that the infidel does not deny but that there are many good things in the bible, but not quite *harmonious* with the divine perfections. Natural religion is much *better* calculated to demonstrate the equity, wisdom and benevolence of our maker. Herein you appear to unite with them, in recommending your plan of
worship

worship as being that mode alone which is *consistent* with the character of Deity. With you, the Almighty can neither be equitable in his government or bountiful with his favors, until you have changed his person, nature and station to coincide with your creed. St. Paul declares that the one mediator between God and man was an *human person*, the man Christ Jesus, in all things like unto his brethren; and that the only supreme governor of the world, he worshipped as Deity, was but one divine person, *even* the Father who was above all. This doctrine the apostle learned from the language of his master Jesus; Christ said to his disciples he was a *man* that told the truth, and that his father was to be worshipped as the only true God of all. But this plain account of the Messiah and him that sent him will by no means accord with Mr. F's favorite plan. You must have a divine messiah and mediator, and a man-god governor; and make an inferior messenger of Almighty God, and exalt his servant Jesus to absolute sovereignty, or your scheme will not stand. To convert an infinite being into a finite character, and an inferior person into infinity, without any discord would be a very difficult task to many. But Mr. F. can pretend to execute this very easily. It is done upon paper, by dividing the godhead between the Messiah and him that sent him, and that equalizes their persons and characters. So that you

can stile Christ or his father Messiah and Mediator, or worship either of them as Almighty God, just as it suits your system; and then recommend this mode of changing the person and station of Jehovah and his servant, as that alone which is consistent with revelation, and the perfections of the one unchangeable God, and regard Christ's rule of worshipping the Father as Deity, no better than jargon and heresy!

But it ought to be noticed, that as your plan of dividing, multiplying and changing God is only upon paper, and confirmed by confidence, your very consistent scheme will appear when examined *a mere sound of words*, and as directly opposite to the genuine sense of scripture, and the real character of Almighty God, as the properties of a creature are contrary to those of the infinite creator.

To be sure, you somewhere inform us "that you do not mean to contend for the mere sound of words," but, like too many, your wishes & conduct do not correspond; for this long controversy seems to be nothing else but a strife about the *mere sound* of the three following words, *worship one God*, and when these three words are wrested from their natural meaning, & put into logical dress to establish your scheme, read as follows, None but an infinite God is the proper object of divine adoration; Christ is stiled *God*, and said to be worshipped, and he and his father are called one. Therefore,
praying

praying to the Messiah is invoking that very being who sent him, and those who worship the Father alone as deity, and regard Christ as his servant, do not worship the true God, and are no better than heretics. Thus you blind the understanding of mankind with such sophistical sound instead of plain truth, and prevail with them to admire your mystical phrases instead of exercising their own understandings in reading the bible. The fact is this, You persuade your hearers of what great consequence it is to worship Christ as God, and the all importance of the doctrine entirely prevents them enquiring for evidence, and then a mere jingle of unmeaning words serves to establish and recommend it for divine doctrine: But if they would only discard your mystical terms and attend to the real scriptural *sense* of the character of the Messiah and him that sent him, they could not help perceiving the imposition. I do not believe that Mr. F. has an adult person in his congregation so ignorant of God and his bible, and the meaning of words, but *knows*, that absolute *infinity* stamps the character of the one Almighty God and Father of all from all other beings, and that he never yet exchanged stations with any of his servants. And you cannot find a person who will pretend to be so destitute of discernment as to want to be informed, that whatever similarity of names or titles with deity are given to any person sustaining an inferior

ferior office, and acting by delegation as God's servant, that person can never claim supreme adoration. And there is no man who has ever read his bible with attention, and knows the meaning of the words messiah and mediator, but must be certain, that the person who fills those delegated offices is an inferior and separate character from Jehovah; and Mr. F. himself will not pretend to be such a stranger to his bible but grant, that such a station is the real character of the Son of God. Therefore Mr. F's long contention for the deity of Christ can be deemed nothing better than a mere strife about words to no profit; to the subverting mankind and perverting the truth.

And as you find many texts that are quite opposite to your scheme, both in sound and sense, the next step that you take to recommend your plan is to unite with the deist in *perverting* plain revelation. There is such a striking likeness between the tenor of the bible and the perfections of Deity, that an infidel finds it difficult to withstand the evidence of its divinity, until, by his criticism, he has perverted its plain contents. This very method you are obliged to take to propagate your notions as divine. You are sensible that there are very many express texts which positively contradict your scheme, and prove, if they are allowed to mean what they affirm, that Christ and his Father are two separate and unequal beings; one acting

as servant in subordination to the other, and claiming a distinct and unequal regard. Something therefore must be done with these plain and decisive passages which oppose your opinions, for you do not like to have the name of contradicting the Messiah & God his Father, although you are obliged to do so. But, somehow or other, you have got such an art of managing your contradictions, that you can even persuade people that you speak the real sense of scripture in the *very act* of contradicting it. Having, as I before observed, divided the Godhead between the Messiah and him that sent him upon paper, you find no difficulty in perverting and changing the real sense of those passages that speak of the inferiority of Christ and the superiority of his Father above him, and you can explain them to mean perfect equality. And when the Messiah declares that he acted by delegation from another, you can make such language to signify God Almighty speaking himself, only then as acting in his lower office. So that although the bible writers maintain an infinite disparity between the person and character of the Messiah and Almighty God who sent him, their language with you stands for nothing at all. With your interpretation you can entirely change the meaning of words, and tell your hearers, that there is no difference or distinction between Christ and his Father, for they are perfectly equal, yea, one and the same infinite being.

Thus,

Thus, as you remark, to establish your scheme, "You go on, killing one text and stoning another, until you have formed quite another gospel," that of St. Athanasius, and persuade your hearers how vastly more god-like is your inferential gospel of the fathers than the plain gospel of the Son of God!

It was the office of the Jewish priest to read the sacred text and give the *sense* for their edification; but by observing your manner of treating scripture, we might justly conclude, that you imagined yourselves called of God to contradict and pervert the plain language of the bible, to prevent the people from understanding of it. This you have done when you undertook to persuade mankind, that the Messiah and Almighty God his father had exchanged stations, or that when God sent his son, this messenger was the one God who came himself; it appears, as you remark, as though you "took up your pen to write in favor of nonsense rather than godliness," and meant to join the profane infidel in turning the language of scripture into burlesque and ridicule, and expose the authors to scorn and contempt!

Indeed, the sacred writers are so very express and decisive in affirming, that Christ had a God above him whose servant he was, and "their language, as you say, was so plain and intelligible to the understandings of the common people," that they

they could not misunderstand their meaning, if you had not first perverted its contents to establish your system.

Let but the simplest man in all your congregation, whose judgment is not warped by your mystical interpretation, only read the bible-account of the character of Christ and Moses, and he could not help perceiving, that they were *both* sent as servants to the same God, and both equally claimed to be regarded as his messengers, in subjection unto him, & not to be invoked as Deity. Were half-a-dozen unlettered day-labourers only allowed to read the scriptures with their own eyes, and exercise their little stock of unsophisticated *common sense*, they would put a whole convocation of you Rev. Divines to the blush, for thus insulting their understandings, in persuading them, that an infinite and finite character were perfectly equal; and that when the Almighty sent his Messenger, this servant of the Lord was no other being than Jehovah himself. Instead of these plebeians admiring your changing the character of the supreme Governor of the World, into a mediator and servant to his creatures, and exalting the Messiah above him, they would be able to expose such "nonsense" to contempt, and insist upon it with St. Paul, that a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one, even the Father. For as you justly observe, "If people were to talk

in matters of science and philosophy as you (Rev. Divines) have affected to talk in religion, they would be treated as fools, and deemed unworthy of attention." It is only upon this subject that men have ever been applauded for contending for that to be divine truth, that God himself, and all the world declare is a notorious falsehood!

To be sure you do somewhere inform us, "It is the glory of christianity that it is a plain and rational system." Herein I cordially agree with you, but would ask in your own words, "Is it not strange that plain things should become so absurd" through your interpretation? You must mean the christianity of the New Testament, and not your *mystical* plan, that can have any claim to rationality, or can be understood by the common people. When you affirm of the everlasting God who fills immensity, that he was "wrapped in swaddling cloaths, and lain in a manger," and the one unchangeable Creator and Father of all relinquishing his original dignity, and "becoming a servant and mediator, and dying upon the cross," it looks as you say, as if you wrote "in favor of nonsense rather than godliness;" and if it is the glory of christianity that it is a rational system, by such degrading language Mr. F. must attempt to rob it of all its glory! For as you observe, "The most absurd notions may be asserted, and seem plausible, under the covert of a few unmeaning terms; when

when the same things, if stripped of that covering, would appear ridiculous at first sight." And pray, Sir, What can be more ridiculous, than to persuade people, as you have done, that the one God of the New Testament was a mutable being, who acted as a servant to the God of Moses and the Prophets, and yet that Jews and Christians ought to worship one and the same unchangeable God?

But as ridiculous as your conduct must appear to every impartial mind, by your mystical and sophistical mode of interpretation, you can persuade your hearers that it is impossible but you should be right, and that your opponent must be in a great error. If I plead that Christ is a mediator and messenger sent of that God who was above him, this say you, we never pretend to deny; but here is my grand mistake: although I am quite right in saying that Jesus was the Messiah, and God his Father and our Father, as I will not unite with you in contradicting him, and actually changing his character into that of Almighty God who came himself, I am sure to be wrong. Thus, as you say, "You see, or may see, that it is not in the power of language to stand before such criticisms and reasonings as those on which you build your system;" for it seems as you remark, "as though you did not understand the meaning of words," by attempting to change an infinite character into finite, and inferiority into infinity. You

will not I hope be offended with me, in reminding you of an hint you lately made of your opponent's expounding the bible, as not altogether unapplicable to yourself: "Such, Sir, is your exposition of scripture. Except in a certain maniac, in our own country, I never recollect to have seen so much violence done to the word of God in so small a compass;" and as you justly remark of the same opponent: "I consider as a further proof of your talents for fair & plain reasoning being perverted by a system."

Although the absurdity of worshipping God's inferior messenger as supreme Deity is, I think, the greatest insult upon the understanding and piety of christians that was ever advanced in the world, yet to persuade people to adopt the practice, you unite with the Deists in proposing your plan as an *improvement* upon Christ's mode of worship, which was once proper but now grown obsolete. The Infidels grant, that there are many excellent truths in the Bible, but with them it is somewhat defective, and wants a little correction and addition to make it suit their taste: Only add their scheme of natural religion, and that will perfect the whole. Trinitarians appear to act in the very same manner. The scripture-account of the unity, indivisibility, immutability, and sovereignty of God our Father as alone infinite Deity, and the separation and inferiority of the Messiah

as his servant, they own, has a great deal of truth in it; but then it favours too much of the unitarian leaven with Mr. F. to be admitted for plain bible doctrine in its own native form. The express and decisive words of Christ concerning himself and God his Father, are too rude a sketch to be admired without a further polish. Such plain descriptions of the only true God of all and his servant the Messiah might do very well for the first christians, but are quite too *heretical* for modern taste. Some human artist must be employed to rectify the divine platform, before Mr. F. can allow it to pass for scripture truth among the common people. The only prescriptive form of worshipping the Almighty in the whole Bible, enjoined by the Son of God, is treated by Mr. F. with contempt, until it has received his addition of two more divine persons and a man: Only discard Christ's mode of worship, and adopt your improved form in its stead, and all things will be brought to perfection. Yea, of such vast consequence is your antiscriptural plan, that unless a man will subscribe to a creed, and publicly declare, that he will not follow Christ's directions alone in praying to God, but believes that your plan is much better, he is not to be admitted into your pulpits or congregations, but *excommunicated as an avowed enemy to religion, an heretic & beaten*. I write what Mr. F. knows to be a fact; and if as you say, "it is the height of folly and presumption

sumption to be wise above what is written in the scriptures," I hope that Mr. F. will be ashamed of being any longer so presumptuous as to worship the Messiah, God's servant, instead of that being who sent him, *contrary* to his plain command and example, and impose the practice on mankind as an improvement upon Christ's original plan.

But after you have thus exalted your mode of worship as much preferable to the Messiah's standard, the next step that you take to recommend it is, by uniting with Deists in delivering your opinions in a *dictatorial* and *consequential* tone, as a far more eligible, certain, and safer plan than Christ's. The infidel proposes natural religion as so very plainly made known to all, that you might as reasonably expect the Almighty must give written directions for the fish to swim, and the bird to fly by rules, as reveal laws to govern the actions of moral agents: Nature's voice, say they, speaks in such decisive language, that her dictates cannot be misunderstood by any, and revelation is quite superfluous and contemptible, as representing the author of nature at variance with his own works. In this very light does your scheme represent the only true God of the bible. He has plainly informed us, that his nature, person, and character are absolutely *one*, but his own account of himself will by no means accord with your creed.

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You well know, that the plain language of the Messiah concerning himself and Almighty God his Father, who sent him, is as disgustful in most trinitarian ears, as divine inspiration in the ears of a deist; and you likewise must grant, that your mystical terms, triune, incarnate God, &c. are admired above the scripture-names of Jehovah and Father, among your party, as much as natural religion is extolled by infidels as preferable to bible truth. The infidels alledge, that if the Bible had not contradicted the laws of nature, they would have received it as divine; and you declare, by your conduct, That if Christ had never said, When ye pray, pray to the Father, but always prayed himself, and directed his Disciples always to have prayed to your three persons as their God, you would then have credited his testimony as true, and followed him alone as your only teacher and example; but as he never mentioned *one word* about a triune Deity, but affirmed quite the *contrary*, that the God of christians was but one person, even his Father, you are obliged to discard his language and practice as heretical and *spurious*, and recommend your improved form, as that *alone* which is essential to salvation.

And when you have thus persuaded mankind, that there is no probability of their being saved without worshipping the Messiah as the one supreme Deity, contrary to his own directions,
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you appear to unite with Deists in propagating your opinions, by teaching people to read the Bible *backwards*, and treat the writers as *impostors*. The general rule of judging what are the real sentiments of an honest man is, by observing what himself declares; but the method you instruct mankind what were the opinions of the inspired writers concerning the Messiah and he that sent him, is quite contrary to this rule. Instead of learning from their plain language what were their views of the nature, person, and character of Jehovah and his servant Jesus, we must conclude, that they were either ignorant enthusiasts, or hypocritical deceivers, who said one thing while they meant quite opposite. You own that they were advocates for the unity of God, and yet contend that they were Trinitarians; But how do you prove it? Not by appealing to what they say, as is the best mode of proof in all other cases, for you know that they never *once* asserted that Father, Son, and Spirit were one God; yet say you, we must understand that was always their meaning; and, notwithstanding whenever they notice the one God of all, they never mention any other name or person but the Father *alone* as the *only* true God, we are to conclude that they always meant there were two more persons in Deity. It is really somewhat serious to observe, how you prevail with people to treat the Bible writers as
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the worst of deceivers, and to regard yourself as an honest man. You know that they were strict and consistent Unitarians in their words, *because*, they never joined any other name or person with the Father as the one God of all, and yet you plead that they were sound Trinitarians at heart. If you was to say one thing and mean the contrary, Men ought to treat you as a deceiver; & according to your scheme, Christ & his Apostles ought to be treated as enthusiasts or the vilest impostors, declaring that of the Messiah and him that sent him which they knew to be false!

But when you have prevailed with mankind to read their Bibles backwards, and treat the authors as impostors, and yourself as more infallible, you can even persuade them to admire your conduct, in further uniting with Deists in directly *contradicting* and *opposing* the plain language of revelation, to establish your plan; only with this difference, the infidel discards the whole bible as a fiction, and you contend for a part as inspired, but violently oppose and contradict those texts which do not agree with your system. *Every passage* within the bible, which plainly expresses the nature, person, and character of the only one true God and Father of all and his servant the Messiah, you must positively contradict and erase out of the book, before you can possibly claim to be heard in contending for worshipping the Mediator

as sovereign Deity. I will just give a short specimen to my readers of your opposition to bible truth, by contrasting a few passages with your creed, that they may perceive that you do not learn all "immediately from the Oracles of God," as you advise others to do:—

Christ told his disciples that when he was gone to heaven, they should ask him nothing, but pray to the Father in his name, for the true worshippers worship the Father who is a spirit.

Christ often declared that he did not come of himself to do his own will, but acted solely by delegation from another.

This is life eternal, affirms the Messiah, to know the Father to be the only true God, and own me as his messenger whom he sent.

Christ meant no such thing says Mr. F. for to address another being as Deity in his name would prove that himself was not supreme God. It is quite wrong to pray after Christ's manner, for the only true worshippers worship the Messiah as God who is not a spirit.

That cannot be true, says Mr. F. for I have proved that Christ had no one above him, but always reigned as the only supreme God of all.

That is quite a capital mistake, says Mr. F. for I have often told my people that it is eternal death to worship the Father as the only true God of all, and regard Christ as his inferior servant.

Peter

But

Peter declared that Christ was the son of the living God, a man approved of God.

To us, says St. Paul, there is but one God even the Father of all who is above all, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

The old Testament prophets invariably affirm that the Messiah was to be a person that the Lord their God

But, asserts Mr. F. had I heard Peter's confession I should have reprov'd both him and his master too for commending such heresy, for I am much better informed who the Messiah was, and am allowed to have proved that Christ was not a man approved of God, but the one living God himself.

The apostle was quite misinformed, declares Mr. F. and has deceived Dr. Priestley and others in affirming that Christ was an human mediator, and the Father alone supreme God. I have proved there is no such doctrine in the bible, the same being that was mediator was sovereign Deity. Paul was entirely wrong in not calling Christ god-man mediator, & him and his father the one God of all.

All the prophecies respecting the messiahship & mediation of Christ, Mr. F. declares, are absolutely
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God would raise up and send as his servant like unto Moses, to act as a middle person between God and man.

St. John informs us that the sole design of their writing the history of their master was to prove to the world that he was God's inferior messenger. These things were written that ye might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the sent of God.

I am God, says Jehovah and change not, the only sovereign Creator and Father of all, besides me there is no God. The inspired writers said, That the Lord their God was one Lord, and his name was one.

false ! The Almighty never meant to send any messenger to mediate between himself and mankind, but designed to become incarnate and come himself as the promised Messiah, for I have made it plain that Christ was the "everlasting God when wrapped in swaddling clothes and lain in a manger."

No such thing says Mr. F. St. John was quite mistaken, for the whole scriptures were written to demonstrate that Jesus was not sent as God's servant, but to be worshipped as the one supreme God himself.

I know better than the inspired prophets, says Mr. F. Jesus the mediator, who was rich and became poor, was likewise our Maker & God. I have spent my lifetime in proving that the God of Christians is a changeable being, and have made it appear that, the Almighty

Almighty Father was quite mistaken in declaring that himself alone was Deity, for his son Jesus and another person were equally supreme. The sacred writers were in a great error indeed, asserts Mr. F. in using the singular number I, thou, me, &c. when speaking of Jehovah, for they ought always to have used the plural we, us, them, &c. for three are always more than one.

To quote all the passages that you are obliged to contradict to establish your scheme would be to write out the greater part of the bible; these will suffice to shew, that Trinitarianism and Primitive Christianity are not synonymous terms nor principles, as many are imposed upon to believe, but quite opposite in words and real sentiments.

You somewhere complain of your opponent "flying in the face of scripture language;" but I think that we cannot find even amongst the most impious Deist or Atheist, a more daring opposition unto the express language of revelation, than what you are obliged to practise to establish your mode.

To be sure, by substituting your curious distinctions of a two-fold and opposite office and character of the Almighty, and adopting your mystical plan of explaining scripture, you can persuade people that all those number of texts which are directly opposite to your creed, speak the very same doctrine; but the question which determines the propriety and lawfulness of your contradicting
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the divine oracles, to set up an opposite object of supreme worship from that enjoined by the Son of God is, as you observe, "Whether we are to understand the New Testament as it was left by the sacred writers, or, as corrected, amended, curtailed and interpreted (by you Rev. Orthodox Divines,) with a view to make it accord with your favorite system?" Yes, an answer to this question seems to decide the controversy; for, if it can be proved, that by your comment and confidence, you have actually changed the nature, person, and character of Almighty God and his messenger, the Messiah, and the meaning of scripture language, as you affirm, that will make it appear right to worship God's servant Jesus as supreme Deity; But, if after all your labour and applause, the properties and station of Jehovah and our Advocate and Mediator still remain the same, as plainly recorded in revelation, and the writers meant what they expressly affirm, then, to invoke the Messiah as the one God of all, instead of that infinite being who sent him, can be deemed nothing less than uniting with the Deist and Atheist in divesting the Bible and the world of God!

On impartially comparing Trinitarianism with Deism, I apprehend that we may justly conclude with you, "that the near affinity between them is so manifest, that it is in vain to disown it. Nobody supposes them throughout the same." For

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as you observe, "There are degrees of infidelity as well as immorality. An avowed Deist may be more of an infidel than a [Trinitarian];" but as you say, "Infidels they both are, and both unite in making God a liar." Does Mr. F. suppose that I accuse him unjustly, in thus classing him with the Deists in attempting to make the Almighty appear so impious? St. John confirms it as a fact; for, he that believeth not the record God has given of himself and his Son maketh God a liar. And, as Mr. F. has written some hundreds of pages, and preached many thousand sermons to persuade people that the Almighty never had a son whose name was Jesus, whom he sent as his messenger and servant, to be Mediator between himself and mankind, but declares, that person the Bible writers affirm bears that name and office, was the one everlasting God himself in human nature. Such declarations can be deemed nothing less than joining the Infidels in making the Messiah and God his Father both liars, for Mr. F. knows, that they positively assert that they were two separate and unequal beings, one acting as a servant in subordination unto the other, although you have persuaded numbers to believe the *contrary!*

When we take up the writings of profane Infidels we do not wonder if we find them use ridicule instead of argument, and substitute sophistry
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for truth; but we expect better things from the professed friends of christianity; and yet, to establish your scheme, you are obliged to make use of far more absurd and degrading language concerning Almighty God than the most inconsistent Deists. Whilst they only deny him the prerogative of giving any written laws to mankind, you represent him as deceiving them with *prevarication*, *chicanery*, and *falsehood*, instead of plain truth. According to your creed, Jehovah and his servant Jesus say one thing and mean the contrary on purpose to lead us into error and delusion; And if we believe what they have said to be true, and follow their directions as our only guide, we are certain of falling into what your party call, that *damnable heresy** of worshipping the God and Father of

* If Mr. F. doubts the truth of what I write, I would refer him to a piece lately published by my near neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Jones of Creaton. Though I do suppose that the pious author has gone rather further in menacing language than many of his brethren quite approve of, yet he has honestly spoken out the sense and spirit of your system, that numbers of you are ashamed to speak so plain. To be sure, Mr. J. even curses those who will not join him in his anathematizing language, which may probably fall upon some of his more candid brethren; for he tells them, if any of them should even "hope that any of my opinions may go to heaven, it is a vain parade, glaring hypocrisy, and awful ignorance;" and declares, "those who even hope to see any of us in heaven, lay aside their Bible as soon as that hope is founded;"

of our Lord Jesus Christ as the only one supreme God of all, and regarding his Son as the true Messiah who was sent !

But must we believe that the God of eternal truth and his well beloved son would thus deceive mankind with lies, in declaring that they were two separate and unequal beings, and claimed a distinct and unequal regard, if we had been required to have worshipped them both as the only one infinite God and Father of all ? No, rather let us conclude with Mr. F. "That a scheme which requires us to maintain such manifest inconsistencies, as yours does, must be some how or other fundamentally wrong;" and that Christ's language and his who sent him is, after all your opposition, likely to be *fundamentally right*. For as you say, "a God of such description, who could deceive his creatures by saying one thing and meaning the contrary, would become an object of contempt to every serious mind." And may we not with you indulge the "hope is too undisguised to gain credit with serious minds any longer;" *because*, as you observe, "such doctrine cannot be that light which cometh from above, but the darkness which springeth from beneath tending to eclipse it."

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founded ;" and positively affirms, "that we are gone back to Heathenism, and guilty of Cain's infidelity, Baalam's duplicity, and Korah's rebellion; and that you may read our religion, our politics, and our doom, in the second chapter of the Second Epistle of Peter, as directly accursed of God."

As Mr. F. has taken upon him to contradict the language and practice of the Son of God, and to tell the world that he was entirely mistaken in praying to his father, and instructing his disciples to pray unto him alone as the only true God of all, for himself can teach them a much better plan; It may not be altogether improper to interrogate Mr. F. in his own words, "What is he about? What does he mean," by thus misrepresenting and dishonoring that holy God he professes to adore and serve, and insulting the authority of our exalted advocate and mediator at God's right hand, he pretends to love and follow as his only guide? When you took up your pen with a view to persuade mankind that you could actually change the nature, person and character of the Messiah and that one Almighty God who sent him, did you suppose that men in the eighteenth century would never make any use of their understandings when they prayed unto God? or must we not conclude that when Mr. F. changes the character of Jehovah more than ten times in one prayer and sermon, he never can properly exercise his own understanding? Surely! you could never mean to prove that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ was a mere fictitious name in scripture, who never had any existence; and that Christ and his Apostles were quite deceived in worshipping him as the only one true God of all, instead of the Messiah whom he sent, that you invoke as Deity.

But seriously, what can Mr. F. have been all his life-time employed about, in thus turning things upside down, and attempting to convert an infinite God into a finite character, and exalt one of his servants into absolute infinity above himself? The following words of your own I think so proper an answer to this question, that I should not do you justice if I did not remind you of them: "There is (you say) a set of principles which have got into the world by *stealth*, principles which great numbers act upon, but which scarce any one dares openly maintain. Let them but be fairly stated, and those that hold them, if they have any feeling, will be shocked at the thought of them. Were they but openly and in words avowed, many worthy characters who maintain them, would see their nature, and retract them." Upon this quotation, as applicable to your mode of worshipping God's messenger as the one Almighty God of all, I will make the following remarks:

You somewhere inform us, "That the Apostles did not make use of terms in a contrary sense from the common affairs of life, and that the most natural and obvious meaning is the only proper sense of scripture." According to your rule of interpretation I proceed to observe, That you must grant, when the Son of Man prayed unto his Father, and commanded his Disciples to pray unto him alone as the only true God of all in his name,
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and required them to regard himself as God's inferior messenger & servant who was sent, Christ then sowed *good seed* in the world. And, as the natural obvious and only possible sense of his language is, That the true worshippers worshipped the Father as Deity, who is a spirit, and regarded Christ as the promised Messiah, that must be the *only right* sense of scripture; and, as you cannot help knowing, that your compound, delegated, mutable, subordinate, and inferior deity the mediator, is as opposite in his real character and station from that Being who says, I am God and change not, as a finite creature and an infinite God; you must allow that some *enemy* to Christ and his Father has sown your opinions while men slept, and thus they were sown in the church through *craft*, and have grown up by *stealth* in the night; so that whenever you are awake, and will compare your notions in open day-light with Christ's plan of worship, you will perceive that they are as contrary to his language and practice, as tares are opposite to sterling wheat; and, no doubt but you will then disown and discard all such tenets as upright men would *stolen* goods, as being highly disgraceful to christians, and dishonourable to the Messiah and Almighty God his Father. As you will find upon examining the *data* on which they have been introduced and propagated, that you did not come *honestly* by them, nor can continue to hold them
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without *robbing* your master Jesus and him that sent him of their lawful authority and just claims; and if you are not past feeling, will be greatly shocked at such disingenuous and dishonest conduct towards characters you highly esteem, and retract it with abhorrence as most shameful and contemptible to the christian name; and unite with me in making the Messiah's directions and example your only rule of divine worship, When ye pray, pray to the Father as supreme God, whom St. John declared was, when he wrote his epistle, without any variableness or shadow of turning.

And, as I never yet heard of any change taking place, since Christ was upon the earth, in the person & character of the one Almighty God of the bible, *only* in Trinitarian creeds, I must conclude with you, that they have adopted "a false creed, & a kind of superstitious devotion may be kindled by falsehood;" for what they have affirmed of changing Jehovah and his Servant must be a falsity, if the Bible is credited for divine truth. And if we follow the Apostle's direction we must say, Let the word of God be true, and every man a liar who contradicts it, as Mr. F. is compelled to do to establish his scheme.

However, as I do really hope that Mr. F. is not at present among those whom the apostle describes as being past feeling, and given over to strong delusion to continue to believe and justify a *known* lie,

lie, but that his moral powers although greatly benumbed by adhering to human systems, are still capable of being made to feel the power of divine truth. With a view to rouse into exercise those palsied principles of his heart, which his education opinions have too long held quite dormant, and excite him to discard every antisciptural form of worship, and join the Messiah's standard as his only rule, I would conclude a short address to Mr. F's understanding and conscience from his own words, "*Here let him pause,—let him reflect in the fear of God upon the ground on which he now stands,—let him seriously think whether it will bear him through.*"

My once intimate friend, whom I still much respect, for many years you have gloried in the name of being a follower of Christ, and professed to teach others to discard every human form of worship, and learn all their religion from him alone. A more worthy master you could not have chosen, nor more honorable service could you have been employed in. Upon your own conduct let me now intreat you solemnly to *pause*, and ask yourself this question, Can I appeal to my hearers and the heart searching God, and say with St. Paul, that I never delivered any one doctrine but what I have received of Jesus Christ, and say unto them, When you pray unto God, Be ye followers of me as I am also of Christ Jesus? You are conscious that you have

have invariably taught mankind both by precepts and example to invoke the Messiah as the only one true God of all ; But did you learn that mode of worshipping Deity from his prescriptive form of divine worship, or from some other model ?

Good Sir, You have often persuaded me to own Christ as my only master, and to believe and follow no man's doctrine or practice any further than they followed him ; and why I should now be treated as Christ's avowed enemy because I have told you the truth, & will make his plan of worship my only pattern before yours, I cannot conceive. As you must allow that the Messiah taught mankind to pray unto the only one true God of all, you ought to give some very substantial reasons why you censure me for following his plain directions. Do seriously *pause*, and reflect on the ground on which you now stand ? In your manner of worship have you observed all things whatsoever Christ commanded you, or have you not ? Like a wise builder sit down and calmly count the cost before you advance any further with your plan, lest you should not be able to finish with advantage and honour. You know, that he who heard Christ's sayings and did them was building upon the rock of eternal truth, and was honorably rewarded ; but he that heard them and did them not, was building on the sand of human error and deception, and at the time of tryal his building fell, and he met with
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fatal disappointment. Solemnly consider to which of those builders your precepts and practice of worshipping God's messenger as Deity is applicable; For, however long your famous superstructure has been admired by man for its symmetry and strength, if it is not founded upon the plain testimony of Christ, when impartially tried, must fall, and all its admirers brought to confusion.

Here again let me awaken your reflection to *pause*, and re-examine in the fear of God the ground on which you now stand, whether it will *bear you through* when tried by an infallible standard. As your opinions will undergo an impartial tryal before that man whom God has appointed to judge the world, whom you have taken much pains to *convert* into sovereign Deity, it becomes you seriously to consider whether he then will bear you through, for thus opposing his command and example, and changing his real person and character and that of Almighty God who sent him. You have persuaded numbers to discard Christ's plan of worship and prefer yours before his as much better. Will not you and your followers be greatly confounded when he asks you this question, Why did you render void my commandments and those of my Father through your tradition? You have spent a great deal of time and labour in persuading mankind that there is no such being as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the

the Bible, to be worshipped as the one supreme Creator and Governor of all; but have you not reason to tremble, lest you should have been leading them to fight against Almighty God? You know that you have been long trying to your uttermost to banish the worship of that Being, Christ invoked and taught his Disciples to pray unto as their only sovereign God, out of the world; But have you not reason to blush with shame and confusion, lest Christ should say unto you at the tribunal-day, Forasmuch as ye were ashamed of me and my words and example, I will now disown you as my opposers before my Father and an assembled world. It may not be very material what you and I may think of each other while here, but whether Christ at the last day will approve or disapprove of our conduct, you must grant, is of considerable importance. Well! let us then often solemnly *pause*, — *Let us reflect, in the fear of God, on the ground on which we now stand, whether it will bear us through before our impartial Judge.*

With these friendly hints, which are dictated by no other motive but a sincere regard to the scripture characters of the Messiah and Almighty God his Father, I will conclude my letter, only, would just recommend a practice to all my readers, you somewhere enjoin upon your opponents, “*Earnest Prayer.*” If you have differed from me in what I have advanced, I do hope of having your most

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cordial and practical consent to this request: As you observe, "There is nothing like experiment in religion." And without boasting I can recommend this practice by past experience; for whether I am right or wrong in differing from you, I did not imbibe my present views until frequently addressing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in praying for particular direction on this subject; and after repeated trials, I find encreasing satisfaction of mind that there is such a Being, who is the only all-sufficient and prayer-answering God, and would say to Mr. F. Go thou and do likewise, and I doubt not but you will find him the same, and want no other God besides.

Above all things, let us beware of casting off fear, and restraining prayer before God. It is not, I apprehend, the *isms* of Athanasius or Socinians that is half so influential to lead men to immorality and deism, as a dumb and prayerless spirit. I never yet knew a man turn either Deist or Atheist in consequence of increasing in serious and earnest prayer to the one God and Father of all, according to the directions and pattern of the Messiah, nor do I think that I ever shall. I agree with you, "That we are never so safe as when we go about these matters with prayer, fear and trembling." Let every change in our religious views be but the effect of fervent prayer, and assimilate us into the spirit and example of our great master
Jesus,

Jesus, and I doubt not but we shall be approved of him, and meet with the blessing of Almighty God his Father and our Father, although condemned as heretics by men of your order.

However, should Mr. F. choose to continue an avowed enemy to the Messiah's standard of worshipping our maker to gain his favour, or the applause of his brethren, I shall still esteem it the greatest honour and happiness that I can obtain on earth to be classed with Christ and his Disciples, among the true worshippers that worship the Father alone as the only true God of all, and that regard the Messiah as God's servant whom he sent, and invite all my readers to share the same honour and felicity, if they would wish to insure a final triumph among the followers of the Lamb.

And, although for thus publicly discarding your mode of invoking God's servant as Deity, and strictly adhering to the Messiah's standard, they may incur from you Rev. Gentlemen the odium of *heresy*, and those terrible anathemas that I have received from your order, those persons will have reason to rejoice with me in being stigmatized with such contemptible names and severe execrations, *because*, as you observe, "It is for holding fast that truth only which God has revealed, and designed we should embrace as divine; and that will endure reflection in a dying hour, and be approved when the time of disputing will have an end with man."

And, I cannot better express the real sentiments of my heart, than to conclude with wishing Mr. F. and all my readers may abandon all human forms of worship, and continue humble supplicants at God's throne of grace according to Christ's directions and example, until the end of life, and thus finish their course like the Son of God, with fortitude, calmness, and holy joy; and then, I doubt not, but at the resurrection morning, Christ will pronounce them blessed of his heavenly Father, the only original source of all blessedness and felicity to his intelligent creation.

I am,

REVEREND SIR,

Your sincere well-wisher,

E. SHARMAN.

Cottesbrooke, June 24th, 1800.

POSTSCRIPT.

TO prevent you or any of your party branding me again as being the "cat's-paw of artful men," I have proceeded with this publication after the same manner as I did with my last; put my own writing to the press just as I wrote it, without shewing a line to any one for advice, patronage, or correction; and as you know me to be destitute of literary talents for accuracy of writing, I hope that your candour will excuse the grammatical defects.

Indeed, nothing but a consciousness of the great impediment Mr. F's writings were to the spreading of genuine Christianity; could have induced me to have opposed a man who has obtained the very highest degree of literary and polemical fame that was ever known among Protestant Divines; for the Reviewers of Mr. F's piece in the Evangelical Magazine for January 1797, positively inform us, that Mr. F. "uses no weapons but such as are spiritual," and that his book is a "perfect model of christian controversy;" while Mr. F. and many of his brethren have deputed what I have written, nothing but the "scolding of an old woman, religious bully and lies." And, my thus attempting to correct a perfect model will be, no doubt, construed as arrogance and vanity in the extreme!

Well, as Mr. F. observes, I "comfort myself with this, that men uninspired of God are liable to err;" but be that as it may, should not Mr. F's panegyrist, nor my defamers have exceeded the bounds of prudence & truth, I have yet some hopes that my writings may not be altogether in vain;

vain; for, as perfect things always appear to advantage by being viewed in open day-light, the public will remember, that I have neither altered Christ's original plan of worship nor your present mode, but copied each from both your language, that all may judge for themselves; and if both are alike free from defects, by adopting each as our guide, we are certain of arriving at perfection. As this was my principal design in engaging in this controversy, and if those ends are but promoted by their comparing your creed with Christ's own words, I shall not think my labour lost, although my opponents should still continue to censure me with their wonted severity.

But whether my readers think with your reviewers, that your writings are entirely without a flaw, or suppose with me, that at least they will bear a little correction, They may perceive, that you actually do materially differ from the plain command and example of the Messiah in worshipping God, and if his manner was perfectly right, so far as you vary from his rule, They cannot help knowing, that you must certainly be mistaken, unless you can prove that perfection and imperfection, following Christ's rule and Mr. F's, are synonymous things.

The learned critic had undoubtedly some end in view in making you a competitor with Christ. The late Mr. Fletcher contended for several kinds of perfection, and very probably your reviewers may hold with similar notions, for I hardly think that they would exclude the Messiah from their list of perfectionists, although they so much extol your opposition to him; They must only mean that your manner is a standard of *modern* perfection, as now much more suited to the taste of most christians than Christ's original plan; and this is the reason why you have so many more followers than the Son of God.

And

And whether my readers are Disciples of Christ, or admirers of Mr. F's mode, they may perceive that no man can serve two masters that are so directly opposite in their requisitions: You require me to worship God's messenger as Deity, and the Messiah commands me to invoke that Being who sent him as the only one true Jehovah. No man can serve God and Mammon; if I follow Christ I must discard your mode as spurious, and those who adopt your plan must reject Christ's as a fiction. All who choose to be imposed * upon by the partial, unjust, and antiscrptural

* Whenever any authors are set upon a level with the inspired writers, in the manner you are, the public are under as much obligation to examine with impartiality what is advanced as if they were reading the bible, and of all the writers of the present day there are none which I think we ought to read with greater caution than those of reviewers; for they are become so very numerous that almost every theological scribber of antiscrptural nonsense may find his admirers; I apprehend that it might be of much advantage to mankind if some of our senior connoiseurs would now and then publish a small tract, *The Reviewers Reviewed*. If it did not entirely exclude all the party advocates from their corps, as Gideon's experiment of lapping at the water excluded the cowards from his army, it might at least teach some of our juvenile critics not to be quite so positive in their conclusions. A fact which came within my knowledge relative to this subject that I apprehended ought not to be concealed from the public: One of the Reverend Gentlemen engaged in publishing the *Evangelical Magazine* inserted a piece and there reviewed it himself; and although he did not exalt his work quite so much as some of these Gentlemen did Mr. F's, yet he was very liberal in lavishing his praises upon his own production. I spare publishing this same minister's name, because I would not injure his reputation, but would gently whisper in his ears, and in the ears of all those who exalt the opinions of their party as a perfect standard, the following lines of *Dr. Young*—

"Fame is a bubble the reserved enjoy,

"Who strive to grasp it, as they touch, destroy;

"'Tis the world's debt, to deeds of high degree,

"But if you pay yourself, the world is free."

tual conclusions of evangelical critics, will still adopt your mode as a "perfect model;" but such that will unite with me in making Christ's language and practice their only rule, will no longer admire the decisions of your panegyrist as infallible, but will follow your own judicious rule of deciding what is real bible perfection before them, by allowing "THE MOST NATURAL AND OBVIOUS MEANING TO BE THE ONLY PROPER SENSE OF SCRIPTURE; AND TO LEARN WHAT IS DIVINE TRUTH IMMEDIATELY FROM THE ORACLES OF GOD."



(From the Press of W. Barred, Harborough.)

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